

What is claimed is:

1. A method of manufacturing a vehicle frame assembly comprising the steps of:
 - (a) forming a first vehicle frame component by:
 - (1) providing a closed channel structural member;
 - (2) deforming the closed channel structural member to have a relatively small end portion and a relatively large end portion;
 - (3) providing a member having first and second ends; and
 - (4) securing the relatively large end portion of the closed channel structural member to the first end portion of the member to form the first vehicle frame component;
 - (b) providing a plurality of second vehicle frame components; and
 - (c) securing the first vehicle frame component and the plurality of second vehicle frame components together to form the vehicle frame assembly.

- 15 2. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (a) is performed by deforming the closed channel structural member to have a relatively small central portion extending between first and second relatively large end portions; dividing the closed channel structural member to provide a first section including the first relatively large end portion and a second section including the second relatively large end portion; providing an intermediate member having first and second end portions; and securing the first relatively large end portion of the first section to the first end portion of the intermediate member, and securing the second relatively large end portion of the second section to the second end portion of the intermediate member to form the first vehicle frame component.
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3. The method defined in Claim 2 wherein said step of dividing the closed channel structural member is performed by dividing the relatively small central portion of the closed channel structural member.

4. The method defined in Claim 2 wherein said step of dividing the closed channel structural member is performed by cutting.

5. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step of deforming the closed channel structural member is performed by hydroforming.

6. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (a) is performed by deforming the closed channel structural member to have a relatively small central portion extending between first and second relatively large end portions; dividing the closed channel structural member to provide a first section including the first relatively large end portion and a second section including the second relatively large end portion; providing a first end member having first and second end portions and a second end member having first and second end portions; securing the first relatively large end portion of the first section to the first end portion of the end member; and securing the first relatively large end portion of the second section to the first end portion of the second end member.

7. The method defined in Claim 6 wherein said step of dividing the closed channel structural member is performed by dividing the relatively small central portion of the closed channel structural member.

8. The method defined in Claim 6 wherein said step of dividing the closed channel structural member is performed by cutting.

25 9. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (b) is performed by forming one of the plurality of second vehicle frame components by (1) providing a second closed channel structural member; (2) deforming the second closed channel structural member to have a relatively small end portion and a relatively large end portion; (3) providing a second member having first and second ends; and (4) securing the relatively large end portion of the second closed channel structural member to the

first end portion of the second member to form the one of the plurality of second vehicle frame components.